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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HELSINKI 001137

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA AND EUR/NB

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [FI](#) [IZ](#) [CH](#) [TU](#) [IR](#) [SU](#) [ZL](#) [XF](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: GYMNICH MEETING: FINLAND SAYS EU "FAIRLY UNANIMOUS" IN SUPPORT OF FINANCING UN PROTECTION FORCE

REF: A. STATE 182534

[B](#). STATE 180598

[C](#). STATE 166158

[D](#). HELSINKI 894

[E](#). HELSINKI 1124

Classified By: POL Chief John Hall for Reasons 1.4(B) and (D)

[1](#). (C) Summary: In an August 27 meeting with the chief of the MFA's EU coordination unit, we reviewed the agenda for the September 3-4 Gymnich meeting. We were told that the EU is leaning toward a financial contribution to support a UN protection force in Iraq -- and that Finland would consider making a national contribution if EU funds did not materialize. (The GoF made that position official on September 1; see septel.) On other issues, we were told the Finns: still favor shifting EU focus from the China arms embargo to improving the code of conduct; have no problem with giving Turkey a date for beginning accession negotiations; support sanctions against Sudan -- if those sanctions take into account the concurrent need to end Sudan's civil war; agree pressure must be kept on Iran; feel Ambassador Eide's recommendations on Kosovo make sense but may be hard to implement; and support the Sharon plan for Gaza withdrawal -- as long as it is not Gaza first and last. Our exchange on Burma/ASEM is reported in Ref E; the Finns seem still inclined to accept a lower-level Burmese presence at the summit. End Summary

Iraq

[2](#). (C) On August 27 POL Chief and PolOff met with Kimmo Lahdevirta, chief of MFA's EU coordination unit, to review issues likely to be raised at the Foreign Ministers' upcoming Gymnich meeting. Lahdevirta said that in addition to the topics mentioned in Ref A, the ministers' agenda includes Iraq and Middle East peace negotiations.

[3](#). (C) We asked whether the EU had come to any decision on the request that the European Union contribute financially to cover certain costs for countries that provide troops for a UN protection force (Refs B, C). Lahdevirta said that the question had been discussed at that week's meeting of the PSC, and his understanding was the participants were "fairly unanimous" that the EU should provide some money (he did not say how much) from EU common funds to support this initiative. He said that the FMs will take up the matter at the Gymnich, but in the meantime, the Commission has been tasked with finding the money to do this.

[4](#). (C) Lahdevirta added that Finland prefers the idea of the EU contributing as a group, rather than some individual members providing national funds. But if EU funding does not materialize, he said, Finland "would be willing to consider" making a national contribution. (Note: On September 1, the GoF reported formally to us, and to its fellow EU members, that this is Finland's position. See septel for further details.)

China Arms Embargo

[5](#). (C) We argued, as we have in past conversations with the GoF, that the government of China would portray lifting of the embargo as an endorsement of China's recent human rights record, an endorsement China certainly does not deserve. Lahdevirta said the Finns understand and agree that the Chinese human rights record is "very problematic." Nevertheless, the GoF still believes the most productive course would be to shift attention to the EU code of conduct, tighten it so that it more effectively controls high-technology items not covered by the arms embargo, and bring it into the EU's body of codified, binding legislation. (Septel reports on a subsequent, more detailed conversation with nonproliferation chief and PolDir-designate Vierros-Villeneuve.)

Turkey and the EU

[6](#). (C) Lahdevirta said that Finland (during whose 1999 EU

presidency Turkey became a formal candidate for EU membership) has no problem with Turkey being given a date for the beginning of accession negotiations. He added that the GoF has been "very disappointed" with the Greek Cypriots' reaction to the decision to widen contacts with Northern Cyprus.

Sudan/Darfur

17. (C) Lahdevirta said Finland is prepared to consider sanctions against the Government of Sudan, but reiterated that those sanctions must take into account the ongoing and separate need to foster peaceful resolution of the government/SPLA civil war. (See Ref D and previous.)

Iran

18. (C) The GoF is "waiting eagerly" for the UK/French/German report, but certainly agrees that the EU must be part of the international pressure on Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA and to suspend all its enrichment-related and reprocessing activities.

Kosovo

19. (C) Lahdevirta described NATO PermRep Eide's recent report to the UNSYG as "very critical and his recommendations very harsh -- but they may be necessary. The question is how to implement them." The report, he said, contains ideas that make sense, but are more easily said than done. On the issue of Belgrade's interests in Kosovo, Lahdevirta remarked that Kosovo Serbs have a legitimate fear of being marginalized or cantonized. They must be able to feel that they have a future.

Middle East

110. (C) The EU will do what it can to support PM Sharon's Gaza withdrawal plan, said Lahdevirta, but with the understanding that it cannot be Gaza first and last.

MACK